



McAlester AAP Receives Prestigious Safety Award

MCALESTER, Okla. – The Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Army Environment, Safety and Occupational Health praised McAlester Army Ammunition Plant employees for receiving a prestigious safety award at a ceremony held at the plant today. Displaying the flag are: Mr. Hershell Wolfe, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Environment, Safety and

Occupational Health); COL Timothy Beckner, Commander, McAlester Army Ammunition Plant; Mr. L. L. Powell, president, American Federation of Government Employees, Local 2815; and Mr. Jyuji Hewitt, Deputy to the Commander, Joint Munitions Command. (U.S. Army photo)

“This is a significant event for our safety community. This safety program recognition is a commitment from everyone at McAlester Army Ammunition Plant to have a quality of life they’ve never had before,” said Hershell Wolfe.

McAlester AAP received Voluntary Protection Program star status recognition from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, recognizing that the plant exceeded OSHA’s regulatory requirements and sustains a world class safety and health program.

The VPP program recognizes employers and workers in private industry and federal agencies who have implemented effective safety and health management programs and maintain injury and illness rates below National Bureau of Labor statistics averages.

In 2010, the Department of the Army spent \$177 million dollars on workers’ compensation, and this is preventable, Wolfe explained. VPP encourages back to work programs to get people off long term workers’ comp.

“The VPP program empowered McAlester’s employees to raise safety issues; this is the employees’ program,” Wolfe said.

Addressing the standing room only crowd of employees, Col. Timothy Beckner, McAlester AAP commander said, “McAlester is the best place to work and live, and I’ve served in a lot of places.”

Tenant agencies and the union are also among the employees and workers recognized for VPP status, he said.

“Achieving VPP is just another jewel in McAlester’s crown of achievements,” said Beckner.

The commitment to VPP from the command and the workforce impressed OSHA the most, said L.L. Powell of the American Federation of Government Employees, Local 2815.

“We worked hard to get this VPP status. I’m proud we got here,” he said.

Jyuji Hewitt, Deputy to the Commander, Joint Munitions Command, and Commander at McAlester AAP from 2001-2004, told the workforce that with achieving a new status comes a new responsibility.

"You are now setting a standard for the rest of the Army's industrial base. It all starts with the individual and this is about all of us having a safe environment," he said.

Hewitt noted the significant improvements in safety McAlester AAP has achieved since participating in VPP. That record includes: reducing recordable injuries by 23 percent; reducing lost time injuries by 86 percent; reducing lost work days by 77 percent; reducing restricted duty days by 60 percent all the while increasing workload by 23 percent. Injury reduction alone represents approximately \$8.3 million in cost avoidance from FY06 through FY10, according to National Safety Council estimates.

To the applause of the workforce, Beckner and dignitaries presented a VPP plaque and Star Workforce VPP flag.

McAlester AAP is the Department of Defense's premier multi-purpose installation capable of producing a wide variety of munitions and providing power projection for the joint Warfighter.

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